# Ten Facts About Open Digital Badges

## 01 Open badges are portal digital credentials

Open badges are created and issued by a wide variety of organizations, such as colleges, universities and other training providers, professional associations, non-profits and private companies, for their students, members, staff, clients and partners to recognize learning achievements. Below are links to four well-recognized definitions of digital badges:

- OpenBadges - https://openbadges.org/get-started/
- eLearning Industry - https://elearningindustry.com/guide-to-digital-badges-how-used
- CanCred Factory - https://factory.cancred.ca/faq/#What%20are%20Open%20Badges?
- MacArthur Foundation - https://www.macfound.org/programs/digital-badges/

## 02 Digital Badges launched in 2012

The protocol and framework for digital badges was developed in 2011 and launched in 2012 as Open Badges 1.0 by the Mozilla Foundation, with the support of the MacArthur Foundation and three hundred other organizations.

By 2017, IMS Global Learning Consortium (IMS) assumed the support for the international protocols for the award of badges, which are recognized through international standards embodied in Open Badges 2.0, released as a standard in 2016. IMS certifies third parties to manage badging systems, such as Badgr, Openbadges and the Open Badge Factory. Below are links on the history of digital badging.

- Initial open badge protocol - https://openbadges.org/about/#history
- History of micro-credentials and badges - https://obviouschoice.com.au/what-are-micro-credentials/

# 03 The value of the badge comes from the information or metadata attached to it providing justification and validation

Each badge contains important data built in that links to the issuer and relevant standard bodies, criteria (how and when the badge was earned), and verifying evidence (it links to artefacts, documents, or testimonials demonstrating the work that lead to earning the badge), thus providing concrete evidence and proof of skills, achievements, and interests.

This is important in helping to open new career and learning opportunities for badge holders. Additionally, this supporting data reduces the risk of 'gaming' the system and builds in an implicit validation system. More information on the validity of digital badges are found below.

- Design principles card deck - http://dpdproject.info/cards
- Validation systems for badges - Cassilli, C. (2014). *Badge System Design: what we talk about when we talk about validity*. Blog post at https://carlacasilli.wordpress.com/2012/05/21/badge-system-design-what-we-talk-about-when-we-talk-about-validity/
- Building Trust Networks - https://carlacasilli.wordpress.com/2012/08/24/mozilla-open-badges-building-trust-networks-creating-value/

# 04 Thousands of colleges, universities, schools, training providers, and non-profit and for-profit organizations use badges to recognize and reward specific learning achievements

Recognized badges can be found through a variety of search engines, such as BadgeRank and BadgetheWorld. eCampusOntario is spearheading a focused strategy for the deployment of digital badges in post-secondary institutions in Ontario. Examples of institutions in Ontario providing badges as part of their offerings, include, but are not limited to:

- Centennial College - https://www.centennialcollege.ca/programs-courses/centres-institutes/centre-for-global-citizenship-education-and-inclusion/global-citizens-get-hired/global-perspectives-digital-badge/
- Durham College - https://www.durhamregion.com/opinion-story/7920063-there-s-a-badge-for-that-e-credentials-help-professionals-stand-out-in-crowded-job-market/
- George Brown College - https://www.georgebrown.ca/news/new-digital-innovation-badges-recognize-outstanding-students.aspx
- Humber College - https://appliedtechnology.humber.ca/explore/continuingeducation/micro-credentials.html
- Seneca College - http://www.senecacollege.ca/media/2018/2018-05-08.html?page=1
- Western University - https://teaching.uwo.ca/research/documents/open-badges-report.html

Across Canada, many other public colleges and universities are offering badges for learning, including the University of British Columbia, Simon Fraser University, University of Calgary, Lethbridge College and many others.

## 05 Canada's certified badge system is provided by CanCred Factory

[CanCred Factory](#) certifies badges and enables tracking by a provider and their learners. Some fees are involved if there are more than ten badges in the issuer's catalogue and more than 5,000 badges are issued in a year.

## 07 Many employers issue badges for competencies and skills development

Doubletree by Hilton, IBM, Home Depot, Enterprise Rent-a-Car, Toshiba and Lowes are a few examples. Similarly, many professional bodies issue badges for professional development activities for attending a professional development event and non-profit organizations are also exploring open digital badges. See some innovative examples below.

- Workforce examples of badge use - http://etherpad. badgealliance.org/workforce-badges-in-use/
- IBM Digital Badges use - https://www-03.ibm.com/ services/learning/ites.wss/zz-en?pageType=page&c=M42 5350C34234U21
- Hive Learning - badge regime to help young people master digital privacy and security skills - https://www.hivetoronto.org/

## 06 Some colleges and universities issue badges as micro-credentials (sometimes called nano-credentials) – a student may obtain specific badges for soft-skills (e.g. teamwork, critical thinking) while pursuing a course for credit.

At the [University of Michigan](#), students are awarded badges which are considered co-curricular learning for demonstrable capabilities in community service, cross-cultural experience, ethical behaviour, intellectual curiosity and leadership. Most badges are awarded for just a few hours of learning; typically, in the range of 5 - 25 hours (although there are a few outliers at both ends of the range). Below are examples of how post-secondary institutions are using badging for soft skill development.

- Soft skills badges at Colorado State University - https://www.online.colostate.edu/badges/essential-soft-skills/curriculum.dot
- The SAGRADA model for awarding soft skills badges - Devedzic, Vladan & Jovanovic, Jelena & Tomić, Bojan & Sevarac, Zoran & Milikic, Nikola & Dimitrijevic, Sonja & Durić, D. (2015). Grading soft skills with open badges. CEUR Workshop Proceedings. 1358. 24-29 available at https://www.researchgate.net/publication/283131364_ Grading_soft_skills_with_open_badges

# 08 Badges are being used for self-study recognition

Some **MOOC providers** and organizations making use of open educational resources are using badges to enable recognition of learning undertaken by self-study. Learners complete a "badge challenge" activity and, on successful completion, are awarded a badge. Below are examples.

- edX - https://blog.edx.org/digital-badges-on-the-open-edx-platform
- The Open University offers forty-five free badged courses in its OpenLearn platform - https://www.open.edu/openlearn/get-started/badges-come-openlearn

# 10 The global digital badges market was USD $65.0 million in 2017

The global digital badges market is expected to reach USD $205.6 million by 2023, growing at a compound annual growth rate of 19.8% during the forecast period. Many see a significant future for badges in the emerging skills agenda for lifelong learning and higher education. Below are links to further information on the digital badge market.

- Think Research - Think Us! Global Digital badges Market Size, Status and Forecast 2023 available at https://www.marketsandmarkets.com/Market-Reports/digital-badges-market-129529268.html?gclid=Cj0KCQiAwc7jBRD8ARIsAKSUBHIxiZbuGfVgspuBIZMqU7tiFVRwG6-IkVghNxoUhASf2rgQSC_ieKQaAozDEALw_wcB
- Global Digital Badges in Education Market 2018-2022 - https://www.reportlinker.com/p03841111/Global-Digital-Badges-Market-in-Education-Sector.html
- ICDE Working Group - The Present and Future of Alternative Digital Credentials - https://icde.memberclicks.net/assets/ICDE-ADC%20report-January%202019%20%28002%29.pdf

# 09 Badges earned by a learner are placed in an e-portfolio or open badge passport

Some learning management systems – **Moodle**, **Canvas**, **Blackboard**, **D2L's Brightspace** – have the ability to manage a learner's e-portfolio including badges. Learners can then share their e-portfolio/passport with others – potential employers, peers, other educational institutions, and professional organizations. More examples of skills passports are found below.

- CanCred Passport is a free to use skills passport - https://passport.cancred.ca/
- Ontario Skills Passport - http://www.skills.edu.gov.on.ca/OSP2Web/EDU/Welcome.xhtml